**IT Applications Unit 3, AOS 1, Online Communities**

Complete the following, from Chapter 2, Online Communities, on pages 51-58

**Website that support online communities**

**Wikis**

1. Describe the nature of a wiki.

A wiki is a website that allows users to enter and communally edit its content. The website can consist of many interlinked pages; these pages can be edited via a web browser using a simple text editor or simplified markup language.

1. What are strengths of wikis?

The strengths of wikis are:

* They are collaborative and anyone in the community can contribute their knowledge e.g. multiple people can work on the same document (it becomes a sum of their knowledge)
* Through the collaborative work wikis are a great source of information.

1. Distinguish between, public, protected and private wikis.

A public wiki is a wiki that is open to anyone on the internet; they are also allowed to edit the content. Whereas a protected or private wiki is a wiki that requires membership, its content cannot be edited by a non-member.

1. What is meant by soft security?

Soft security is security that protects something from harm in quiet and inconspicuous ways; it is often done after the fact. Soft security is for social control mechanisms rather than the traditional mechanisms like authentication.

**Blogs**

1. What is a blog?

A blog is a website that has only one main page, this page acts as a journal entry and is usually maintained by a single author who writes the regular entries that include comments, description, news on a particular topic of person, images and videos.

1. Distinguish between a blog and a wiki.

A blog is a website consists of one main page and is usually only edited by one person, whereas a wiki is a website that allows users to communally edit its content. It also has any number of interlinked pages that can be edited via a web browser.

**Forums**

1. Describe the nature of a forum.

An internet forum is an online message board or discussion website that supports online communities that wish to facilitate information exchange. Users are able to visit the forum and leave comments (also known as posts, they are a block that contains the user’s details, the date and the time that it was posted).

1. What is a thread?

A tread is a collection of posts displayed from oldest to latest. Threads are defined by a title, an additional description (this may summarise the intended discussion), and an opening original post that started the thread. A tread can contain an unlimited number of posts; they can also have multiple posts from the same user.

**Purpose of an online community:**

1. To broadcast information and events using various tools
   1. List tools for broadcasting information.

The tools that are used in the broadcasting of information are:

* A simple website
* A blog that has been set up for a specific organisation
* An email mailing list
* A twitter account
  1. What is a RSS feed?

An RSS, really simple syndication, feed allows users to receive content from a variety of sources. When a user subscribes to an RSS feed news stories and updates are automatically delivered to them the moment they are created this is done via a web based news reader.

1. To facilitate discussions, collaboration & information using tools
   1. What is required for collaborative problem solving to work well?

For collaborative problem solving to work well the following principles need to be considered:

* Behind every successful project there is a team: it is important that the team has a common purpose and that the relevant parties are involved in developing ideas.
* A clear purpose ensures success: once the team is formed it is important to get the process right, each team member should have equal access to the relevant information, and the problem-solving should be designed from the inside not the outside this will ensure that it is designed in a way that is sufficiently flexible.
* Clearly documented processes will prevent misunderstandings: it is important that the project is achievable, it is also important that the participants are accountable for what is accomplished.
  1. Distinguish between synchronous and asynchronous collaboration.

Synchronous means that the collaboration can happen in real time using chat or videoconferencing software. Asynchronous means that there is no timing requirement for the exchange of data (each member of the team can respond to the email or tread in their own space and time).

1. To store and develop organisational knowledge
   1. List the tools for knowledge sharing and exchange.

Some of the tools that are used for knowledge sharing and exchange are:

* Wikis
* Microsoft SharePoint
* Groupware
* Content management systems (CMS)

**Characteristics of online communities, p 57**

Be aware of the following:

In setting up an online community characteristics of communities need to be taken into account:

1. Online communities appealing to gender groups
2. Online communities appealing to special needs
3. Online communities appealing to cultural needs
4. Age-restrictive and age-targeted communities
5. Access requirements need also to be considered, (open or closed).

**Non-Technical Constraints on developing a website for a community, p 58**

1. Ensuring privacy in an online community
   1. Describe the strategies that co-ordinators can put in place to decrease the risk of privacy attacks.

Co-ordinators can do the following to decrease the risk of privacy attacks:

* Properly verify all memberships, some communities even have a 24 hour waiting time on memberships to prevent people getting in and doing damage.
* They can force members to choose safe passwords i.e. combination of letters, lower and upper case, numbers, symbols and enforcing a minimum length for the password to be. This is all to lower the probability of ‘hackable’ passwords.
* Community administrators need to also be observant of activity happening on the site and be quick to pounce on any inappropriate behaviour.
  1. How does the Information Privacy Act protect privacy?

The Information Privacy Act protects privacy by stopping the owners of an online community from using any collected data without the consent of the people it was taken from.

1. Copyright in online communities
   1. What copyright considerations need to be taken into account when setting up a community?

When setting up an online community the following copyright needs to be taken into account:

* Do you own the images or text you are using on your website
* Are you infringing on the copyright of others by broadcasting discussions or ideas in an open forum.

1. Human rights requirements
   1. What is contained in the Human Rights & Responsibilities Charter that covers members’ freedom, respect, equality and dignity?

The following topics are covered in the Human Rights & Responsibilities:

* Hate crimes: an online community should not encourage crimes based on hate or religious vilification of others
* Discrimination: an online community should not discriminate on the basis of gender, culture or sexuality
* Victimising members: an online community should not encourage the victimisation of members.

1. Social online protocols
   1. What is meant by online protocols?

Online protocols are protocols that govern the way members must act and how disagreements are solved in an online community.

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